

A GROSS INDIGNITY

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A SERMON
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“And they spit upon him.”
Matthew 27:30

THE night before He had “sweat, as it were, great drops of blood falling to the ground,” that fair visage, which was “fairer than that of any of the sons of men,” had been marred by agony and grief without parallel. During that night He had no rest, He was dragged away from one tribunal to another. First, He was brought before a council of priests, anon He stood before Pilate, and now, after the mockery of a trial, He is given up to the soldiers, that they may mock Him before His execution. 'Tis He—the world's Redeemer, the long-expected Messiah, He is led out as a condemned criminal—condemned as a traitor, and given up for blasphemy, that He may die the death!

Do you see Him? They bring forth an old stool, they call that a throne, the Monarch who sways the scepter of the universe, is placed thereon. They thrust into His hand a reed to mock that golden scepter, the touch of which has so often given mercy to rebels, and now they play the worshipper before Him. But what is their worship? It consists of ribaldry and jeer. Having made sport of His kingship, they must needs turn to ridicule His character as a prophet. They blindfold Him, and smite Him in the face, some on one cheek, and some on the other, buffeting Him with the palms of their hands, they pluck His hair, and then they say, making fools of themselves, rather than of Him they thought to make a fool of, “Prophesy, who is he that smote thee?” “Who is this that just now plucked thine hair?” “Who is it that smote thee on the cheek?”

Not content with this, they loose the bandage, and He sees. What a sight is before Him! Faces in every conceivable shape mocking Him—thrusting out the tongue, or screwing it into the cheek, calling Him all the names that their low-lived dictionary could summon up, not content with heaping common scorn upon Him, but counting Him to be “the very offscouring of all things.” Names with which they would not degrade a dog, they use to defile Him.

Then, to consummate all, they spit into His face. Those eyes, which make heaven glad, and cause the angels to rejoice, are covered with the spittle of these rascal soldiers. Down His cheek it trickles. That awful brow, the nod or shake of which reveals the everlasting decrees of God, is stained with spittle from the lips of wretches whom His own hands had made, whom He could have dashed into eternal destruction had He willed!

When I muse on this, my soul is filled with sorrow. The very idea that Jesus Christ could ever have been spit upon by one in human shape appalls me. Do you remember *what sort of face it was that these soldiers spit into?* Shall I read you a description of it? One that loved Him, and knew Him well, speaks of Him thus—“My beloved is white...His countenance is lovely.” (Song 5:10, etc.). It was into this dear face, a coarse brutal soldiery must void their vile spittle!

O church of Christ! was ever grief like yours, that your Husband should thus be defiled, and that, too, for your sake? Was ever love like His that He should suffer these indignities for you? The angels crowd around His throne to catch a glimpse of that fair countenance. When He was born, they came to Bethlehem's manger, that they might gaze upon that face, while He was yet an infant, and all through His devious path of sorrow He was “seen of angels.” They never turned away their eyes from Him, for never had they seen a visage so enchanting. What must they have thought when gathering round their Lord? Surely they would have gladly stretched their wings to have shielded that dear face! What anger

must have filled their holy souls, what grief, if grief can be known by beings like themselves, when they saw these wretches, these inhuman creatures, spitting on Perfection!

Oh! how they must have grieved when they saw the nasty spittle about that mouth which is “most sweet,” trickling down from those eyes which are “like the eyes of doves by rivers of waters,” staining the cheeks which are “as a bed of spices, as sweet flowers,” and falling on those lips which are “like lilies, dropping sweet smelling myrrh.”

This is a subject upon which I must meditate, even though I cannot preach. I cannot describe it to you unless your soul can now draw near to your buffeted Master, unless the Holy Spirit shall give you a near and dear, an intimate, quiet, soul-satisfying view and vision of Him. I cannot give it to you. As well might I attempt to hold a candle to show you the sun as to hope, by anything that I can say, to touch your passions or move your hearts towards my dear Lord and Master, if the vision of Him does not move you to grieve for sin, and to love Him because He suffered thus for you. All I propose tonight is to offer just a few thoughts on this startling fact in the history of our redemption.

“They spit upon him.” *Let us learn here the deep depravity of the human race.* When I see Adam in the midst of comfort putting forth his hand to take that one fruit which his Master had reserved for Himself, I see, indeed, sin and arrogance, daring assumption and a heinous crime. But I do not see so much of levity and lawlessness there as I do in this, that creatures should spit on the Creator. As I look through the annals of human guilt, I see strange stories of man in reckless, defiant rebellion against his divine sovereign. From that first evil hour until now, what strange monsters of guilt has the earth seen!

We have heard of rapine and murder, crimes for which new names have been coined to meet the new atrocities which have been committed, homicide, fratricide, patricide, and matricide, in which every sanctity of kin has been outraged. We have read of fornication, and of adultery, and of lusts worse than bestial. Good God! what is not man capable of? Take but the bit from his mouth, and the bridle from his jaws, and to what depth of iniquity will he not descend?

There is not a filthy dream that Satan ever had in the dark watches of his midnight reverie which man will not embody in act and carry out in all its grim and dread reality. Strange are those tales that have come from a far-off land, where the heathen worship in their darkness. They not merely bow down to blocks of wood and stone, but degrade themselves with vices into which we could never have imagined humanity could plunge.

O God! my heart is heavy as a stone, and smitten with very grief, when I think of what an evil thing man is. Why did You not sweep him from the world? How can You permit a viper so obnoxious to nestle in the bosom of Your providence? *Oh! why do You permit such a den of thieves* to wander abroad, such a cage of unclean birds to swing in ether, and to be carried by Your power round the sun? Why do You not blast it, smite its mountains with desolation, and fill its valleys with ashes of fire? Why do You not sweep the race clean away, and let their very name become a hissing and a scorn?

But my brethren, bad as man is, I think he never was so bad—or rather, his badness never came out to the full so much—as when gathering all his spite, his pride, his lust, his desperate defiance, his abominable wickedness into one mouthful, he spat into the face of the Son of God Himself. Oh! this is an act that transcends every other. There are other deeds connected with the crucifixion quite as malignant, but could there be any so vile? Surely we may say of the men that drove the nails into the Savior’s hands that they did but that which they were ordered to do. They were soldiers, and because they were commanded by their military superiors, therefore, they did it.

But this was a gratuitous act, this was done without command, without any pressure. It was the base wickedness of their own hearts. Sin saw Perfection in its power, and it must spit on Perfection’s cheeks. The creature, the erring creature, saw its Creator, in the mightiness of His condescension, putting Himself into His creature’s power, and the creature spit upon Him to show how much He hated, how much He loathed, despised, abhorred, detested the very thought of Godhead, even when it was Godhead veiled in human flesh, and come into the world to redeem.

And now, while you blush with me for human nature, thus foaming out its own reeking depravity, do pray recollect that *such is your nature, and such is mine*. Let us not talk of things in the general, but bring them home in particular. Just such a base wretch am I, and such a base wretch are you, my dear hearer, by nature, as were those who thus insulted our Lord. I need not go far for proofs, for if we have not spit into the Savior's face literally—that dear sorrow-scarred visage—we have, as opportunity offered, been rude and wanton as they.

Do not you remember the poor saint of God who talked to us of the things of the kingdom, and we laughed him out of countenance? Do we not remember that servant of ours, who anxiously longed to serve her God, but we threw every obstacle in her way, and never missed an opportunity of venting some jest or sneer upon her? And O, most precious Book of God, you legacy of my Redeemer, how often in the days of my unregeneracy have I spit on you, and thrust you into a corner, that the novel of the day might have my attention! I have bidden you lie still, that I might read the newspaper, or something more trivial, and it may be less innocent, might occupy my mind.

O, you ministers of Christ! how have our hearts despised you! And you, you lovely ones, the lowly in heart, who follow Christ in the midst of an evil generation, how often have we said hard things of you, mocked your piety, despised your humility, laughed at your prayers, and made jokes at those very expressions which showed the sincerity of your hearts! In all this what have we done? Have we not really spit into the face of Christ? Come, let us weep together, let us sorrow as those who mourn over a firstborn son, whose corpse lies unburied before them.

I have spit into my Savior's face, but mercy of mercies, He who stands before you tonight self-convicted, can also add, "But He has not spit in mine, nay, He has kissed me with the kisses of His love," and He has said, "Go thy way; thy sins, which are many, are all forgiven; I have blotted out thine iniquities like a cloud, and like a thick cloud thy transgressions."

Melt, then, you eyes, and stream down these cheeks, you briny tears, when I remember that He whom I once despised has not despised me, that He whom I abhorred has not abhorred me, and that though we hid, as it were, our faces from Him, He has not hidden His face from us, but here we are, forgiven sinners, though once we assailed Him with indignity as gross as those who spat into His face.

Having propounded that melancholy fact, I pass on. May God the Holy Spirit impress each of these truths upon our minds, while I merely glance at them.

Why was our Master's face full of spitting? Sweet thought! Our faces were full of spots, and if the Master would save us, His face must be full of spots too, He had none of His own, therefore those spots shall be given Him from the lips of scoffers. You know it became Him who saved us, that in everything He should be made like unto us. We were wounded. What then? "He was wounded for our transgressions." We were sick, and He Himself "bare our sicknesses, and carried our sorrows." Since we were worms, He must say, "I am a worm, and no man." And we being sinful, He must needs bear our sin, and be numbered with the transgressors, and led away to die. In all things He must become a true substitute for those whom He came into the world to redeem.

And now, my soul, come here and look at this wondrous spectacle again. The face of your Lord Jesus Christ is filled with spitting! Was ever sight so loathsome and so disgusting as this? But mark, this is your case. Down your cheeks something worse than spittle ran, from your eyes there flowed something worse than came from the lips of soldiers, and from your mouth there has gushed forth a stream which is worse than that which came upon the Savior's face. Come, look at this glass tonight, my dear brethren and sisters in Christ, for the face of Christ is the glass of your souls. What He endured mirrors forth what we were by nature.

Oh! what spots there were in us! What hellish spots that streams of water could not wash away! What evils of every kind!—pride, and anger, and lust, and defiance of God! Spots, did I say? Why, sure the sun has looked upon our faces, and we have become black all over as the tents of Kedar. 'Tis no more with us now a matter of spots, by nature we are as the Ethiop, black, thoroughly black, but glory be unto His name, His spots have taken away your spots, this spittle has made us clean, we are black no

longer, by faith we may feel tonight that that spittle on the Savior's face has washed away the sin from ours. His shame has taken away our sin, that spitting has taken away our guilt. And now what says your Lord of us? You know what sort of face He has. Just hear Him while He describes ours. You would scarce think that He could mean it, but certainly He does, for He has seen us often, and therefore, He should know.

He says of us, O prince's daughter—"Thine head (Song 7:5-6) upon thee is like Carmel, and the hair of thine head like purple: the king is held in the galleries." And again He says, "Thou art all fair, my love; there is no spot in *thee*." When I first had that text laid home to my soul, well do I recollect how it ravished my heart, I could not understand that my Lord and Master should actually look me in the face, and say, "Lo, thou art fair; there is no spot in thee."

Oh! it is a grand and noble truth. Faith grasps it, love dotes over it, our hearts treasure it. There is no spot left in a believer now.

*"Covered is my unrighteousness,
From condemnation I am free."*

One bath in the precious blood takes away all spots, makes us whiter than the driven snow, and we stand before God fairest among the fair, accepted in the Beloved. Learn, then, O church of Christ, this great truth, that the spittle and the shame of the Savior's face have delivered you from the odious corruption that disfigured you, and you may, therefore, rejoice in His meekness who bare your reproach.

What Christ suffered by way of shame, we must remember, is *a picture of what we would have suffered forever*, if He had not become our substitute and daysman. Ah! my soul, when you see your Lord mocked, remember that shame and everlasting contempt must otherwise have been forever and ever your portion.

One of the ingredients of hell will be shame, to be laughed at for our folly, to be called madmen for our sin, to feel that angels despise us, that God scorns us, that the righteous themselves abhor us, this will be one of the flames of the pit that shall burn the spirits of men. To have no honor anywhere, not even among their base companions, is a bitter prospect, but there is no rank in hell, no being honored in the pit that yawns for the souls of men. "Shame shall be the promotion of fools, and everlasting contempt shall be their perpetual inheritance."

And think, my soul! this had been your portion, but your Master bore it for you, and now you shall never be ashamed because your master was ashamed for you, you shall not be confounded, neither shall you be put to shame, for He has taken away your reproach, and borne it on His own visage, and as for your rebuke, it has entered into His own heart, and He has taken it away forever—it shall never be brought to your remembrance.

Think, dear friends, of the honor which awaits the Christian by and by—

*"It does not yet appear
How great we must be made;
But when we see our Savior here,
We shall be like our Head."*

We shall judge the angels. The fallen spirits shall be dragged up from their infernal dens, and we shall sit as assessors with the Son of God, to say "Amen" to that solemn sentence which shall perpetuate their fiery doom. We shall reign upon this earth a thousand years with Him, and then, clothed in white robes, our joyous spirits in our risen bodies shall enter into heaven's gates triumphant. There we shall be crowned, and treated as princes of the blood, there shall angels be our waiting servants, and principalities and powers shall assist us in our service of song. Before the mighty throne of blazing light, where God Himself does reign, we shall stand, and sing, and bow, and worship, and we too, shall have our thrones, and our kingdoms, and our crowns, and we shall reign forever and ever and ever.

Then we shall look back to that face that was covered with spittle, and we shall say, “We owe all this to that dear disfigured face, all this glory is the result of His shame, because He hid not His face from shame and spitting,” therefore, we have “washed our robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb,” therefore, stand we in the full blaze of heaven’s own glory, and therefore, we serve JEHOVAH day and night in His temple. Let this sweet thought, then, dwell on your mind. Christ’s shame has taken away your shame, His endurance of the spitting has secured your everlasting honor.

To draw another practical truth from this short but thrilling sentence, “They spit upon *him*.” *Blessed Master!* “*if I be like thee, they well spit on me.*” The less I am like You, the more the world will love me, but if, perchance, these wayfarers should see something in me that shows I have been with You, they will give me the remnants of that spittle which they did not spit into Your face. Oh! my Lord and Master! one prayer I offer, “Give me grace to bear that spittle, thankfully to receive it, and to rejoice because I am counted worthy not only to believe on You, but to suffer for Your sake.”

There are many of you, I know, who meet the quiz and hear the laughter of your old companions, when you forsake them to follow Christ. In the associations you have formed, and in your family connections, you often encounter a treatment which is not pleasant to flesh and blood. Does not the evil one sometimes whisper to you, “Follow not with Christ, for this is a sect everywhere spoken against”? “Leave Him, and be honored, go not with Him, when He goes through Vanity Fair. Oh! do not suffer with Him this trial of cruel mocking.”

Ah! that is the song of Satan. Stop your ears to it, and listen not for a moment, but listen you to this true note from heaven, “Rejoice ye in that day, and leap for joy, when they shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my name’s sake, for so persecuted they the prophets that were before you.” Take joyfully not only the spoiling of your goods, but the spoiling of your character. Sing, as our sweet hymnster puts it—

*“Jesus, I my cross have taken,
All to leave, and follow Thee;
Naked, poor, despised, forsaken,
Thou my all from hence shall be.”*

If the world thrust you out, run you to Him, or if it thrust you not out, go out of thine own accord. Go forth without the camp, bearing the reproach. When at any time your heart sinks within you, I would have you consider Him who “endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest thou be weary and faint in thy mind.”

If at any time you would hide your face from the shame and spitting, think you see Him enduring it, and then you will thrust out your face and say, “Let me be a sharer with my Master, treat me like my Lord. If you spit on Him, spit on me, and rather than spit in His face, spit in mine. I will be glad enough if I can but shelter Him. It is my pride to suffer, my boast to be despised for His sake.”

*“I nail my glory to His cross,
And pour contempt on all my shame.”*

Oh! this is a glory which an archangel can never know—the glory of being trampled on by the world for Jesus’ sake, the honor of fellowship in suffering with Christ, and it shall be followed by a greater glory still, when we shall reign with Him above, because we have suffered with Him below.

To conclude, let me draw one more lesson from the fact that “They spit on him.” Christian brothers and sisters, *you that love your Master, praise Him and extol Him*. How the early church used to talk of its martyrs! After those good men, who were stretched on the rack, had their flesh torn from their bones with red-hot pincers, were exposed to the gaze of the multitude naked, and their limbs cut away joint by joint, and then were burned in the fire, but stood calm, and dared without a sigh to declare that, though they were cut into a thousand pieces, they would never forsake their Lord and Master, how did the church ring with their praises—every Christian pulpit talked of them, every believer had an anecdote

concerning them. And shall not our conversation ring with the honor of this Martyr, this glorious Witness, this Redeemer, who thus suffered shame, and spitting, and death on the cross for us? Honor Him! Honor Him! Honor Him, ye blood-bought ones. Be not content to sing—

*“Bring forth the royal diadem,
And crown Him Lord of all;”*

but bring it out, make it not a matter of song, but of deed. Bring it out and put it on His head.

You daughters of Jerusalem! go forth to meet King Solomon, and crown Him, crown Him with heart and hand. Take you the palm branches of your praises, and go forth to meet Him, spread your garments in the way, and cry, “Hosanna! Hosanna! Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord,” leading captivity captive, and scattering gifts for men.

Talk of Him in your houses, laud Him in your conversation, praise Him in your songs, waft you awhile your melodies on earth, till you shall lay aside this clay, and enter into heaven, there to give Him the fiery songs of flaming tongues, then emulate the seraphs, and surround His throne with everlasting hallelujahs, crying, “Unto him that loved us, and that washed us from our sins in His blood, unto Him be glory for ever and ever.”

I think I see Him now. He stands before me. I see that very face that once endured the spitting. Oh! you angels! bring forth the crown, bring forth the crown, and let it be put upon His head this day! I see the piercings, where thorns penetrated His temple. Bring forth the diadem, I say, and put it on His head! ’Tis done. A shout rises up to heaven, louder than the voice of many waters. And what now? Bring forth another, and another, and another crown, and yet another, and anon another yet. And now I see Him. There He stands, and “on his head are many crowns.”

It is not enough. You saints redeemed, bring forth more. You blood-bought ones, as you stream into heaven’s gates, each one of you offer Him a new diadem, and you, my soul, though “less than the least of all saints,” and the very chief of sinners, put your crown upon His head! By faith, I do it now. “Unto him that loved me, and that washed me from my sins in his blood, unto him be glory for ever and ever.” From pole to pole let the echoes sound, yea, let the whole earth, and all that dwell therein, say, “Amen!”

EXPOSITION BY C. H. SPURGEON

JOHN 8:29-59, MARK 14:1-9, JOHN 12:1-7

Christ thus spake to His adversaries.

John Chapter 8. Verse 29. *And he that sent me is with me: the Father hath not left me alone; for I do always those things that please him.*

Brethren, what Christ could say, I trust many of His servants can also say in a like manner. “He that sent me is with me.” What power, what pleasure must the presence of God give to His servants! “The Father hath not left me alone.” Oh! how blessed to feel that behind us is the sound of our Master’s feet, and that in us is the temple of His presence! We cannot, however, say as Christ did, “I do always those things that please him,” for alas! we have the remembrance of sin this morning, and have to confess it in His sight. But let us also remember that He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins.

30-31. *As he spake these words, many believed on him. Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed;*

It is not a mere profession that makes a man a saint, there must be a continuance of well-doing. We bind lads apprentice for a little time, but no man belongs to Christ unless he belongs to Him forever. There must be an entire giving up of one’s self, in life and unto death, to the Lord’s cause.

32-34. *And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free. They answered him, We be Abraham's seed, and were never in bondage to any man: how sayest thou, Ye shall be made free? Jesus answered them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin.*

There is this in the original, "Whosoever maketh sin." It is not exactly, "Whosoever committeth it," because if so, all would be the servants of sin, and God would have no sons at all. But it says in the original, "Whosoever maketh sin," that is, whosoever makes it his choice, and makes it the delight of his soul, whosoever doth this is the servant of sin, and is no son of God.

35. *And the servant abideth not in the house forever: but the Son abideth ever.*

He may be in the house, and have slender privileges for a time, but these soon go away.

36. *If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed.*

And give you the privileges of sons.

37-38. *I know that ye are Abraham's seed; but ye seek to kill me, because my word hath no place in you. I speak that which I have seen with my Father: and ye do that which ye have seen with your father.*

Men always act according to their natures. We shall find the polluted fountain sending forth filthy streams. We do not expect to hear sweet singing from a serpent, nor, on the other hand, do we expect hissing from the bird, but every creature is after its own kind. Christ, coming from the Father, reveals God, ungodly men, coming from the devil, reveal the devil.

39-42. *They answered and said unto him, Abraham is our father. Jesus saith unto them, If ye were Abraham's children, ye would do the works of Abraham. But now ye seek to kill me, a man that hath told you the truth, which I have heard of God: this did not Abraham. Ye do the deeds of your father. Then said they to him, We be not born of fornication; we have one Father, even God. Jesus said unto them, If God were your Father, ye would love me: for I proceeded forth and came from God; neither came I of myself, but he sent me.*

You would see in Me a brother, you would perceive in Me the attributes of God, and being made like unto God as His sons, would love the Godhead in Me.

43-44. *Why do ye not understand my speech? even because ye cannot hear my word. Ye are of your father, the devil, and the lusts of your father ye will do.*

Christ does not speak very gentle words at all times. A deeply-rooted disease needs a sharp medicine, and He gives it. He uses the knife sometimes, and if there be a deadly ulcer that must be cut away, He knows how to do it with all the sternness of which His loving heart is capable.

44. *He was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him.*

The first murder was committed by his suggestion. Cain was guilty of it, but Satan instigated it. He has ever been a man-killer, and so Christ says that, inasmuch as they sought to kill Him, they were worthy sons of their parent. "There is no truth in him."

44. *When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own:*

It is his own idiom. You may always know him by it.

44. *For he is a liar, and the father of it.*

The father of all liars, and of all lies.

45-46. *And because I tell you the truth, ye believe me not. Which of you convinceth me of sin? And if I say the truth, why do ye not believe me?*

Oh! matchless argument! Now were they silent indeed. His whole life was before them, He had not lived in secret, and yet He could appeal to his whole life, from the first day even to this time, and say, "Which of you convinceth me of sin?" It is this that weakens our testimony for God, that we are so imperfect and full of sin. Let us seek to imitate the Master, for the more clean we are from these imperfections, the more shall we be able to shut the mouths of our adversaries.

47-48. *He that is of God heareth God's words: ye therefore hear them not, because ye are not of God. Then answered the Jews, and said unto him, Say we not well that thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil?*

Always abuse your adversary if you cannot answer him, this is always the devil's tactic. When he cannot overthrow religion, then he seeks to append opprobrious titles to those who profess it. It is an old and stale trick, and has lost much of its force. Our Savior did not answer the accusation of His being a Samaritan, but inasmuch as what they said about His having a devil would touch His doctrine, He answered that.

49-51. *Jesus answered, I have not a devil; but I honour my Father, and ye do dishonour me. And I seek not mine own glory: there is one that seeketh and judgeth. Verily, verily, I say unto you, If a man keep my saying, he shall never see death.*

The sting of it shall be taken away, he may fall asleep, he will do so, but he shall not see death.

52-56. *Then said the Jews unto him, Now we know that thou hast a devil. Abraham is dead, and the prophets; and thou sayest, If a man keep my saying, he shall never taste of death. Art thou greater than our father Abraham, which is dead? and the prophets are dead: whom do makest thou thyself? Jesus answered, If I honour myself, my honour is nothing: it is my Father that honoureth me; of whom ye say, that he is your God: yet ye have not known him; but I know him: and if I should say, I know him not, I shall be a liar like unto you: but I know him, and keep his saying. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day: and he saw it, and was glad.*

There is a great force in the original language here, "He was glad." There was an excessive joy which holy men had in looking forward to the coming of Christ. I do not think that we give ourselves enough room for joy in our religion. There are some persons who think it the right thing to restrain their emotions. They have no burstings forth of joy, and seldom a shout of sacred song.

But oh! my brethren, if there is anything that deserves the flashing eye, and the leaping foot, and the bounding heart, it is the great truth that Jesus Christ has come into the world to save sinners, even the chief. Let us be glad as often as we make mention of His name.

57. *Then said the Jews unto him, Thou art not yet fifty years old, and hast thou seen Abraham?*

Why, He was hardly thirty, but sorrow had made him appear old.

58. *Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am.*

Here He claims His deity to the fullest extent, and those who can read the New Testament, and profess to believe it, and yet not see Christ as a claimant of deity, must be willfully blind.

59. *Then took they up stones to cast at him: but Jesus hid himself, and went out of the temple, going through the midst of them, and so passed by.*

This is always the sinner's argument against the right, first, hard words, and then stones.

Mark Chapter 14. Verses 1-3. *After two days was the feast of the passover, and of unleavened bread: and the chief priests and the scribes sought how they might take him by craft, and put him to death. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar of the people. And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,—*

A well-known person. There were plenty of Simons, and so they had to put another name to distinguish him. You remember Simon the Pharisee, in whose house Christ was anointed by a woman, who washed His feet with tears. This is another Simon. Not Simon the Pharisee, but Simon the Leper. A healed man, no doubt, or he could not have entertained guests. There can be no question by whom he was healed, for there was nobody else that could heal leprosy, except our Divine Lord. "And being at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper."

3. *As he sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured it on his head.*

It does not want any "it," "poured on his head." The liquid nard flowed over His locks, and as it was with Aaron, it went, doubtless, down His beard to the utmost skirts of His garments.

4. *And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made?*

Matthew says that they were disciples. Shame upon them. The ointment was put to its proper use. It was more wasted when it was in the box than when it was out of it, for it was doing nothing inside the alabaster box. But when it came out, it was answering its purpose. It was perfuming all round about. "Why was this waste of the ointment made?" When lives are lost in Christ's honor, or strength is spent in His service, there is no waste. It is what life and strength are made for—that they may be spent for Him.

5-6. For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her. And Jesus said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on me.

Or "in me."

7. For ye have the poor with you always,—

If you help them one day, they are poor, and they want helping the next. Or if you help them and leave them, leaving them because they go home to God, there are other poor people sure to come, for they will never cease out of the land. "Ye have the poor with you always."

7. And whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but me ye have not always.

"Ye can only do this for Me during the few days that I shall be with you. Within a week I shall be crucified. Forty more days I shall be gone from you. Me ye have not always."

8-9. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint my body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, this also what she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

And it is so to this day. Christ's Gospel is preached tonight, and this woman's love will be remembered.

John also speaks of this in his twelfth chapter.

John Chapter 12. Verses 1-2. *Then Jesus six days before the passover came to Bethany, where Lazarus was which had been dead, whom he raised from the dead. There they made him a supper;*

It was in the house of Simon the leper, a near acquaintance, perhaps a relative, of this beloved family, for we find that Martha served, but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with Him. The two families had coalesced for this festival, and well they might, for in one case someone had been healed of leprosy, and in the other case Lazarus had been raised from the dead. It was a holy, happy feast.

2-3. And Martha served: but Lazarus was one of them that sat at the table with him. Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus,—

The other Evangelist said, "anointed his head." And they are both right. She anointed His head and His feet.

3. And wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

Everybody perceived and enjoyed it and understood what costly ointment it must be which loads the air with so delicate a perfume.

4. Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,—

I wonder whether he was son of that Simon the leper, and whether a spiritual leprosy did cling to him. That, we know, was the case.

5-6. Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor? This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

Observe that the sharpest critics of the works of good men are very often no better than they should be. This Judas is indignant with what Mary does, and claim that he cares for the poor, but all the while he is a thief. Whenever a man is very quick condemning gracious men and women, you may be quite as quick in condemning him. He is a Judas usually.

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